

Contents

Introduction: What Is This Book and How Can I Use It?	00
PART ONE: A Vision for the Task	00
PART TWO: Resources for Raising Preschoolers to Care for the People Around Them	00
1. Mini-workshops for Teachers	00
2. Serving Projects for Preschoolers	00
3. Blurbs for Teachers and Parents (With the Whole Congregation Listening In) . . .	00
PART THREE: An Elementary Curriculum: Taking My Place among God’s Loving People	00
4. First Grade: We’re Responsible for the Animals	00
5. Second Grade: Sharing So Every Body Has Enough (Food, Water, Medicine . . .)	00
6. Third Grade: It Is a Global Neighborhood	00
7. Fourth Grade: Helping the Homeless	00
8. Fifth Grade: It’s Not Fair! Standing Up for Justice	00
PART FOUR: A Word About the Partnership between Families and Congregations	00
10. A Workshop for Parents Who Are Raising children to Love Their Neighbors . .	00
PART FIVE: The Final Word	00

Introduction

What Is This Book and How Can I Use It?

THE SEEDS OF THIS BOOK WERE SOWN during a conversation at a children's ministry committee meeting. The group was seriously involving children in the mission of their very mission-minded congregation. But someone observed that we tended to plan what we did with the children in response to whatever was going on in the larger congregation rather than consider what we needed to do to raise compassionate, mission-minded children. A schoolteacher jumped in, "What we need is a 'scope and sequence' for mission." We needed both a vision and a plan.

That was the beginning. Over the following years, the committee created a sequence of mission themes for elementary church school classes. The goal was that by the end of their elementary years, children would have experienced the care of others as a central activity of the church and would have personal experience with five basic ministries in which that care is extended. At the same time we were developing a series of mission projects that would be done once a month with preschoolers during the worship nursery hour. After moving from this congregation, I continued to work with and be worked on by the "mission scope and sequence project." This book is an attempt to share "where it is now" with the hope and expectation that it will lead others to take it further in their own congregations.

It begins with "A Vision for the Task." How do children grow in compassion? How can we lead them to love their neighbors? What should we be doing with children at which ages? The remainder of the book is made up of programs, activities, teacher workshops, even newsletter blurbs you can use in building your own scope and sequence for the children of your congregation.

"Resources for Raising Preschoolers to Care for the People Around Them" includes mini-workshops to help preschool teachers help their children build loving relationships with others in their class, a list of mission projects for preschoolers, and a collection of newsletter blurbs describing the work of preschool teachers, worship nursery volunteers, parents, even adult members of the congregation who are not parents in terms of raising compassionate children.

"An Elementary Curriculum: Taking My Place Among God's Loving People" is a

detailed enrichment curriculum for Grades 1-5. A mission theme is assigned to each year. The expectation is that the class will add this to its regular curriculum of Bible study. Each theme includes information for teachers about how children understand that theme at that age, an introductory session, a list of hands on projects from which to choose one or two, a list of “filler type” activities for use in the class throughout the year, a celebratory summary session plan for the end of the year and a resource list.

“A Word About the Partnership between Families and Congregations” explores the partnership between families and congregations as they raise children together. It includes a plan for a workshop for parents.

Start with the vision. Then pick from the “how to” ideas those that look as if they fit your congregation and its children. Build on them and adapt them. Some of the plans may work exactly as presented. Others will need to be adapted to fit your congregation. Still others will not work at all for you. It is also hoped that some will help crystallize your vision and suggest still new possibilities.